*by excessive indulgence in smoking tobacco."* (See page 532 of Hemenway II: *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*)

*IT'S A SECRET*

We always wait until the last paragraph to say something about our drive for new members. Not until our annual meeting can we tell you how we are coming out. Many of you are very loyal and we continue to receive nominations. Keep them coming. Possibly we will have space to list the newest members in next month's issue.

We wish to acknowledge, with sincere thanks, the kind letter of Mr. Harold J. Adams of Buffalo, N. Y., in which he requested that his membership be changed from active to *life*. We quote his last paragraph: "Please let me say that I know of no organization created for public education and benefit that is more entitled to support than yours. I quite agree with Mr. Newton that in planning for the future it is profitable, as well as interesting, to study the work, the ideas and ideals of our forbears, particularly Vermonters."

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATE HOUSE MONTPELIER

Leon S. Gay, President; Earle W. Newton, Director.

Telephone: Montpelier 1500, Extension 39.

VHS *News and Notes*

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Montpelier, Vermont

Sec. 34.66
P. L. & R.

# VHS *News and Notes*

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ISSUED BY THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 1 MAY, 1950 NUMBER 9

## *"IN THE MERRY, MERRY MONTH OF MAY"*

May has been quite a month in Vermont history. 'Twas in the early dawn of the 12th of May, 1775, that the Green Mountain Boys, led by that loquacious frontiersman Ethan Allen, broke into officers' quarters at Fort Ticonderoga to demand surrender. Knowing that the guns of the British-held fort would come in mighty handy, this band of only about 65, accompanied by the very military Colonel Benedict Arnold, had crossed the lake on a captured scow, after trying to rent boats from the British at Crown Point (! !), swarmed through the crumbling walls and scared the pitiful, sleepy garrison half out of its wits. Allen, as he said some years later, demanded the fort in the name "of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress".

Fort "Ti" was a strategic key to the "Northern Gateway", coveted by the British. Allen's idea was that its capture and, later, invasion of Canada might remove the threat of the British from the northern frontier once and for all.

So far, so good.

Allen undertook a rash exploit after being forced to abandon St. John's (Canada) which Arnold had taken. Being commissioned to only excite the Canadians to revolt, he launched a surprise attack with a small half-hearted group on the city of Montreal, no less. He was to have had help by attacks from the south. These were not made and the net result was that our Green

Mountain Boy found himself pursued by an overwhelming force. Allen was captured, then shipped off to England where he was imprisoned for nearly three years.

His story picks up again in May, 1778 (there's that month again), when he lends his usual dash of color to the struggle of the newly formed republic of Vermont.

*ANOTHER MAY, ANOTHER YEAR*

It was 224 years ago this month that the first white child was born in Vermont, Timothy Dwight, Jr. Two years earlier, the first fortified settlement of the English in Vermont, which became the first permanent white settlement in the state, was made at Fort Dummer (Brattleboro).

The fort was built in 1724 by action of the General Court of Massachusetts, and was named after Lieutenant-Governor William Dummer who was presiding over that body. Lieutenant Timothy Dwight was selected to perform the difficult task of erecting the fort in the dead of winter. On that site, on May 27, 1726, his son was born.

Two descendants with the same name became President and Professor at Yale.

Until 1760, Fort Dummer remained an important defensive outpost against marauding Indians and the French, and during peaceful times served as a busy trading post.

*GREEN MOUNTAIN FOLKLORE SOCIETY*

The spring meeting of this group was held April 15th in Shelburne at the Webb estate, where there is being developed a collection of early American buildings, erected as nearly as possible in their original condition. Among the buildings now standing through which the group was conducted, were the big barn with its handhewn beams, the Stagecoach Tavern located originally at Charlotte, the little stone house taken from a farm in the vicinity of Bristol and the country store. These buildings house antiques collected by Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb during the past forty years. Almost all the antiques are American and include collections of wooden Indians and eagles, early folk art, carriages, furniture, pewter, costumes, dolls, and so on.

During the business meeting, Professor Leon W. Dean of the University of Vermont was re-elected president; Mrs. Beth Smith of Rutland, vice-president; Miss Lorraine Spaulding of Burlington, secretary, and Miss Lillian Jacobs of Burlington, treasurer. The second volume of *Green Mountain Whittlin's* was released at this meeting.

*SOME RECENT ACCESSIONS*

*Two Journeyman Painters* by Arthur K. D. Healy and Alfred Frankenstein

Much research was done by the two authors who located and identified over a hundred paintings of Benjamin Franklin Mason and established this "old Mr. Mason" of Middlebury (Vermont), who has been in relative obscurity for a century, as one of the major American painters of the 1800's.

*Oliver Tarbell Eddy* (1799-1868). A biography with illustrations of the paintings of this obscure Vermont portrait painter, born in Weathersfield. This catalogue of his works was compiled in connection with an exhibition held March 28-May 12, at the Newark Museum, Newark, N. J., and May 28-June 25 at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Note: These two volumes are the result of patient research which bring hitherto rather obscure Vermont painters before us and identify numbers of scattered and attractive portraits. The story of early American painting will remain incomplete until such thorough local studies of many now practically unknown painters can be made.

*POULTNEY (VERMONT) HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

This local society, of which Dr. George Sprague is president, has two noteworthy projects underway. The Horace Greeley highway is being marked and the old melodian factory of the town, which was a gift to the society, is being reconstructed and deevloped as a museum.

A museum is the dream of every such group, since immediately upon its formation and with subsequent activity, townspeople wish to place their families' articles and papers of historical importance in a place of safe keeping. The Poultney group has the model location.

*DOES YOUR LOCAL SOCIETY NEED MONEY?????*

Here's an item from the March issue of the newsletter of the American Association for State and Local History:

"A 'White Elephant' auction conducted last July by the Wakefield-Brookfield Historical Society of New Hampshire netted the Society $400 and drew a crowd of 500 persons. Here's how it was done:

"Committees divided the town into sections, then scoured attics, cellars, barns, and cupboards for cast-off bric-a-brac, old picture frames, odd chairs, stoves, and other non-historical but possibly saleable material. Owners gave to the society (1) to clear space, (2) to help the cause, and (3) because they were asked.

"The local auctioneer 'volunteered' his services for the day.

"Society members placarded the surrounding district with auction bills. (There's nothing a summer visitor likes better than a country auction! This one was timed for mid-July, height of the tourist season.)

"Other committees prepared and sold sandwiches, coffee, and cold drinks to swell auction receipts.

"More than 500 people came. Non-members were favorably impressed with the get-up-and-go of the Society. Searchers for 'White Elephants' kept an eye cocked for historical materials as well as for sale items. They located some valuable things that ended up in the collections. The treasurer of the Society lost that worried look when receipts of $400 reached his hands."

Sounds like a good idea, doesn't it?

*MEMBERSHIP DRIVE*

We are listing for you the names of those new members who joined the Society during April. They were nominated by you and invitations were sent at your request.

The members of the Society can take full credit for the increases in our rolls. But now for a critical note. If you haven't nominated your new member, won't you do so? Or why not give memberships as gifts as one of our members does? It is too late for Mother's Day, but there are Father's Day and, always, birthdays. Just the *Quarterly* alone, which one receives free of charge, is worth the price of an active membership. And if you make a gift of sustaining membership, your nominee will receive two publications of the Society, as well as the *Quarterly* and the monthly news bulletin.

Mr. Bert Emery Merriam, *Morrisville*
Mr. Francis J. Porrazzo, *Providence, R. I.*
Mr. and Mrs. Myron Samuelson, *Burlington*
Mr. Frederick W. Fowler, *Hamden, Conn.*
Mr. Don M. Ryan, *New York, N. Y.*
Mrs. James Ashworth, *Southbridge, Mass.*
Mr. David S. Coon, *Escanaba, Mich.*
Mr. Irving S. Ellison, *Hughesville, Pa.*
Mrs. Celia E. Bennett, *Worcester, Mass.*
Mrs. Stephen W. Doty, *Chicago, Ill.*
Mr. and Mrs. Clark Boardman,*So. Hero*
Mr. C. E. Child, *Manchester*
Mr. Walter A. Dane, *Boston, Mass.*
Mr. G. S. Bennett, *Manchester*
Mr. C. Edward Cram, *Buffalo, N. Y.*
Mr. Richard E. Spurr, *Washington, D. C.*
Mrs. Beulah Boynton, *Manchester*
Mrs. Esther Billings, *Montpelier*
Dr. and Mrs. Olin Angell, *Millbury, Mass.*
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hofer, Jr., *Kew Gardens, N. Y.*
Mr. and Mrs. Louis B. Puffer, *Burlington*

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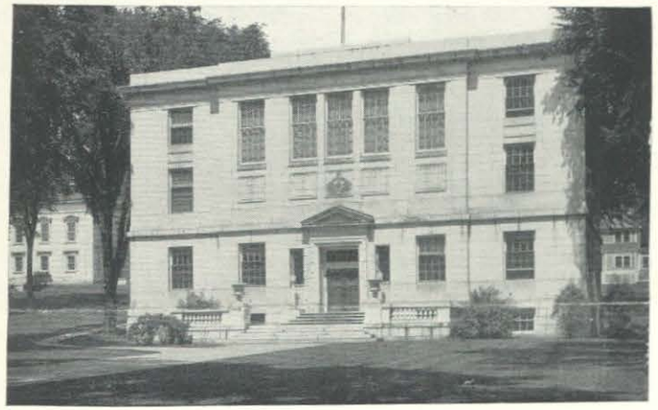

*ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER, JULY 1st, SATURDAY*

Professor Allan Nevins, internationally and nationally known historian, Professor of American History at Columbia since 1931, will be the guest speaker at the banquet in the evening. Also, our recent director, Earle Williams Newton, now director of Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, will be with us and on the speaking program. A secondary program of music and other interesting features will be planned around the speakers. The place will be the Pavilion Hotel, next to the State Library Building, the home of the Society. The new offices, library and museum will be open to inspection.

We feel we are fortunate indeed in securing Professor Nevins for our annual gathering. Possibly no American historian is so widely known and favorably regarded. Born in Illinois, he has ranged widely from his native state. He was visiting professor twice in England, once at Oxford University. During the last war, he served as special representative of the Office of War Information, and later was chief public affairs officer of the American Embassy in London. He has won the Pulitzer prize twice. His summer home is in Windham, Vermont; so we feel he belongs to us.